

Why Is The Attrition Rate Of General Surgery Residents So High?

The cumulative attrition rate of general surgery residents has been holding at about 20 percent, a figure that has been steady for nearly 20 years. This figure is higher than that of most other medical and surgical specialties.

The institution of the 80 hour work week was heralded as a solution to the problem of attrition. Students who in the past wanted to be surgeons but had shied away from surgery were thought to be more likely to enter the field. The presumption was that in the old days, surgery was considered daunting due to the excessive number of hours worked.

If the attrition problem was just about the hours worked, one would expect the attrition rate to be less now; so far, it is not so.

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